

Under the able leadership of Southeastern's president, Dr. Charlene Drew Jarvis, who formerly served with distinction as a member of our city council for 17 years, the university has emerged from past difficulties and reached many milestones.

For example, in 1997, the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area admitted Southeastern to its membership. Since Ms. Jarvis has been president, Southeastern's enrollment has doubled. Southeastern has developed productive partnerships with local businesses that foster community involvement, while at the same time promoting educational achievement. One such partnership is D.C. Link and Learn, a technological training center founded with Southeastern's help near Southeastern's main campus. In addition, Southeastern has obtained cooperative agreements with the Washington Teachers' Union and the Greater Washington Society of Certified Public Accountants to create partnerships in support of professional development programs.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2061 will allow Southeastern to complement these and other efforts under way to strengthen the university's role in the life of the District of Columbia. I urge my colleagues to support this corrective measure.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests to speak on this very important bill, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2061.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2061.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FAMILY COURT ACT OF 2001

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2657) to amend title 11, District of Columbia Code, to redesignate the Family Division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia as the Family Court of the Superior Court, to recruit and retain trained and experienced judges to serve in the Family Court, to promote consistency and efficiency in the assignment of judges to the Family Court and in the consideration of actions and proceedings in the Family Court, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2657

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001".

SEC. 2. REDESIGNATION OF FAMILY DIVISION AS FAMILY COURT OF THE SUPERIOR COURT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 11-902, District of Columbia Code, is amended to read as follows:

"§ 11-902. Organization of the court

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Superior Court shall consist of the Family Court of the Superior Court and the following divisions of the Superior Court:

- "(1) The Civil Division.
- "(2) The Criminal Division.
- "(3) The Probate Division.
- "(4) The Tax Division.

"(b) BRANCHES.—The divisions of the Superior Court may be divided into such branches as the Superior Court may by rule prescribe.

"(c) DESIGNATION OF PRESIDING JUDGE OF FAMILY COURT.—The chief judge of the Superior Court shall designate one of the judges assigned to the Family Court of the Superior Court to serve as the presiding judge of the Family Court of the Superior Court.

"(d) JURISDICTION DESCRIBED.—The Family Court shall have exclusive jurisdiction over the actions, applications, determinations, adjudications, and proceedings described in section 11-1101, except that those actions within the jurisdiction of the Domestic Violence Unit (a section of the Civil Division, Criminal Division, and the Family Court) pursuant to Administrative Order No. 96-25 (October 31, 1996) shall remain in that Unit."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 9.—Section 11-906(b), District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting "the Family Court and" before "the various divisions".

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 11.—(1) The heading for chapter 11 of title 11, District of Columbia, is amended by striking "FAMILY DIVISION" and inserting "FAMILY COURT".

(2) Section 11-1101, District of Columbia Code, is amended by striking "Family Division" and inserting "Family Court".

(3) The item relating to chapter 11 in the table of chapters for title 11, District of Columbia, is amended by striking "FAMILY DIVISION" and inserting "FAMILY COURT".

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS TO TITLE 16.—

(1) CALCULATION OF CHILD SUPPORT.—Section 16-916.1(o)(6), District of Columbia Code, is amended by striking "Family Division" and inserting "Family Court of the Superior Court".

(2) EXPEDITED JUDICIAL HEARING OF CASES BROUGHT BEFORE HEARING COMMISSIONERS.—Section 16-924, District of Columbia Code, is amended by striking "Family Division" each place it appears in subsections (a) and (f) and inserting "Family Court".

(3) GENERAL REFERENCES TO PROCEEDINGS.—Chapter 23 of title 16, District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting after section 16-2301 the following new section:

"§ 16-2301.1. References deemed to refer to Family Court of the Superior Court

"Upon the effective date of the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, any reference in this chapter or any other Federal or District of Columbia law, Executive order, rule, regulation, delegation of authority, or any document of or pertaining to the Family Division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia shall be deemed to refer to the Family Court of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia."

(4) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for subchapter I of chapter 23 of title 16, District of Columbia, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 16-2301 the following new item:

"16-2301.1. References deemed to refer to Family Court of the Superior Court."

SEC. 3. APPOINTMENT AND ASSIGNMENT OF JUDGES; NUMBER AND QUALIFICATIONS.

(a) NUMBER OF JUDGES FOR FAMILY COURT; QUALIFICATIONS AND TERMS OF SERVICE.—Chapter 9 of title 11, District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting after section 11-908 the following new section:

"§ 11-908A. Special rules regarding assignment and service of judges of Family Court

"(a) NUMBER OF JUDGES.—The number of judges serving on the Family Court of the Superior Court at any time may not be—

"(1) less than the number of judges determined by the chief judge of the Superior Court to be needed to serve on the Family Court under the transition plan for the Family Court prepared and submitted to the President and Congress under section 3(b) of the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001; or

"(2) greater than 15.

"(b) QUALIFICATIONS.—The chief judge may not assign an individual to serve on the Family Court of the Superior Court unless—

"(1) the individual has training or experience in family law;

"(2) the individual certifies to the chief judge that the individual intends to serve the full term of service, except that this paragraph shall not apply with respect to individuals serving as senior judges under section 11-1504; and

"(3) the individual certifies to the chief judge that the individual will participate in the ongoing training programs carried out for judges of the Family Court under section 11-1104(c).

"(c) TERM OF SERVICE.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), an individual assigned to serve as a judge of the Family Court of the Superior Court shall serve for a term of 5 years.

"(2) SPECIAL RULE FOR JUDGES SERVING ON SUPERIOR COURT ON DATE OF ENACTMENT OF FAMILY COURT ACT.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—An individual assigned to serve as a judge of the Family Court of the Superior Court who is serving as a judge of the Superior Court on the date of the enactment of the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001 shall serve for a term of not fewer than 3 years.

"(B) REDUCTION OF PERIOD FOR JUDGES SERVING IN FAMILY DIVISION.—In the case of a judge of the Superior Court who is serving as a judge in the Family Division of the Court on the date of the enactment of the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, the 3-year term applicable under subparagraph (A) shall be reduced by the length of any period of consecutive service as a judge in such Division as of the date of the enactment of such Act.

"(3) ASSIGNMENT FOR ADDITIONAL SERVICE.—After the term of service of a judge of the Family Court (as described in paragraph (1) or paragraph (2)) expires, at the judge's request the judge may be assigned for additional service on the Family Court for a period of such duration (consistent with section 431(c) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act) as the chief judge may provide.

"(4) PERMITTING SERVICE ON FAMILY COURT FOR ENTIRE TERM.—At the request of the judge, a judge may serve as a judge of the Family Court for the judge's entire term of service as a judge of the Superior Court under section 431(c) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act.

"(d) REASSIGNMENT TO OTHER DIVISIONS.—The chief judge may reassign a judge of the Family Court to any division of the Superior Court if the chief judge determines that the judge is unable to continue serving in the Family Court."

(b) PLAN FOR FAMILY COURT TRANSITION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia shall prepare and submit to the President and Congress a transition plan for the Family Court of the Superior Court, and shall include in the plan the following:

(A) The chief judge's determination of the number of judges needed to serve on the Family Court.

(B) The chief judge's determination of the role and function of the presiding judge of the Family Court.

(C) The chief judge's determination of the number of magistrate judges of the Family Court needed for appointment under section 11-1732, District of Columbia Code.

(D) The chief judge's determination of the appropriate functions of such magistrate judges, together with the compensation of and other personnel matters pertaining to such magistrate judges.

(E) A plan for case flow, case management, and staffing needs (including the needs for both judicial and nonjudicial personnel) for the Family Court.

(F) A description of how the Superior Court will meet the requirements of section 11-1104(a), District of Columbia Code (as added by section 4(a)), regarding the promulgation of rules to enforce the "one family, one judge" requirement for cases and proceedings in the Family Court.

(G) An analysis of the needs of the Family Court for space, equipment, and other physical plant requirements, as determined in consultation with the Administrator of General Services.

(H) An analysis of the success of the use of magistrate judges under the expedited appointment procedures established under section 6(d) in reducing the number of pending actions and proceedings within the jurisdiction of the Family Court (as described in section 11-902(d), District of Columbia, as amended by subsection (a)).

(I) Consistent with the requirements of paragraph (2), a proposal and timetable for the disposition of actions and proceedings pending in the Family Division of the Superior Court as of the date of the enactment of this Act (together with actions and proceedings described in section 11-1101, District of Columbia Code, which were initiated in the Family Division but remain pending in other Divisions of the Superior Court as of such date) in a manner consistent with applicable Federal and District of Columbia law and best practices, including (but not limited to) best practices developed by the American Bar Association and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

(2) DISPOSITION AND TRANSFER OF PENDING ACTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS.—The chief judge of the Superior Court shall take such actions as may be necessary to provide for the earliest practicable disposition of actions and proceedings pending in the Family Division of the Superior Court as of the date of the enactment of this Act (together with actions and proceedings described in section 11-1101, District of Columbia Code, which were initiated in the Family Division but remain pending in other Divisions of the Superior Court as of such date), but in no event may any such action or proceeding remain pending longer than 18 months after the date the chief judge submits the transition plan required under paragraph (1) to the President and Congress.

(3) TRANSFER OF ACTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS.—The chief judge of the Superior Court shall take such steps as may be required to ensure that each action or proceeding within the jurisdiction of the Family Court of the Superior Court (as described in section 11-902(d), District of Columbia Code,

as amended by subsection (a)) which is pending as of the effective date described in section 9 is transferred or otherwise assigned to the Family Court immediately upon such date.

(4) EFFECTIVE DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN.—The chief judge of the Superior Court may not take any action to implement the transition plan under this subsection until the expiration of the 30-day period which begins on the date the chief judge submits the plan to the President and Congress under paragraph (1).

(C) TRANSITION TO APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF JUDGES.—

(1) ANALYSIS BY CHIEF JUDGE OF SUPERIOR COURT.—The chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia shall include in the transition plan prepared under subsection (b)—

(A) the chief judge's determination of the number of individuals serving as judges of the Superior Court who meet the qualifications for judges of the Family Court of the Superior Court under section 11-908A, District of Columbia Code (as added by subsection (a)); and

(B) if the chief judge determines that the number of individuals described in subparagraph (A) is less than the number of individuals the chief judge is required to assign to the Family Court under such section, a request that the President appoint (in accordance with section 433 of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act) such additional number of individuals to serve on the Superior Court who meet the qualifications for judges of the Family Court under such section as may be required to enable the chief judge to make the required number of assignments.

(2) ONE-TIME APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL JUDGES TO SUPERIOR COURT FOR SERVICE ON FAMILY COURT.—If the President receives a request from the chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia under paragraph (1)(B), the President (in accordance with section 433 of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act) shall appoint additional judges to the Superior Court who meet the qualifications for judges of the Family Court in a number equal to the number of additional appointments so requested by the chief judge, and each judge so appointed shall be assigned by the chief judge to serve on the Family Court of the Superior Court.

(3) ROLE OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA JUDICIAL NOMINATION COMMISSION.—For purposes of section 434(d)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, the submission of a request from the chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia under paragraph (1)(B) shall be deemed to create a number of vacancies in the position of judge of the Superior Court equal to the number of additional appointments so requested by the chief judge. In carrying out this paragraph, the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission shall recruit individuals for possible nomination and appointment to the Superior Court who meet the qualifications for judges of the Family Court of the Superior Court.

(4) JUDGES APPOINTED UNDER ONE-TIME APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES NOT TO COUNT AGAINST LIMIT ON NUMBER OF SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES.—Any judge who is appointed to the Superior Court of the District of Columbia pursuant to the one-time appointment procedures under this subsection for assignment to the Family Court of the Superior Court shall be appointed without regard to the limit on the number of judges of the Superior Court under section 11-903, District of Columbia Code. Any judge who is appointed to the Superior Court under any procedures other than the one-time appointment procedures under this subsection shall count

against such limit, without regard to whether or not the judge is appointed to replace a judge appointed under the one-time appointment procedures under this subsection or is otherwise assigned to the Family Court of the Superior Court.

(d) REPORT BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall prepare and submit to Congress and the chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia a report on the implementation of this Act (including the effect of the transition plan under subsection (b) on the implementation of this Act), and shall include in the report the following:

(A) An analysis of the procedures used to make the initial appointments of judges of the Family Court under this Act and the amendments made by this Act, including an analysis of the time required to make such appointments and the effect of the qualification requirements for judges of the Court (including requirements relating to the length of service on the Court) on the time required to make such appointments.

(B) An analysis of the impact of magistrate judges for the Family Court (including the expedited initial appointment of magistrate judges for the Court under section 6(d)) on the workload of judges and other personnel of the Court.

(C) An analysis of the number of judges needed for the Family Court, including an analysis of how the number may be affected by the qualification requirements for judges, the availability of magistrate judges, and other provisions of this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

(D) An analysis of the timeliness of the resolution and disposition of pending actions and proceedings required under the transition plan (as described in subsection (b)(1)(I) and (b)(2)), including an analysis of the effect of the availability of magistrate judges on the time required to resolve and dispose of such actions and proceedings.

(2) SUBMISSION TO CHIEF JUDGE OF SUPERIOR COURT.—Prior to submitting the report under paragraph (1) to Congress, the Comptroller General shall provide a preliminary version of the report to the chief judge of the Superior Court and shall take any comments and recommendations of the chief judge into consideration in preparing the final version of the report.

(e) ONGOING REPORTS ON PENDING CASES AND PROCEEDINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia shall submit a status report to the President and Congress on the disposition of actions and proceedings pending in the Family Division of the Superior Court as of the date of the enactment of this Act (together with actions and proceedings described in section 11-1101, District of Columbia Code, which were initiated in the Family Division but remain pending in other Divisions of the Superior Court as of such date) and the extent to which the Court is in compliance with the requirements of this Act regarding the timetable for the disposition of such actions and proceedings.

(2) TIMING OF REPORTS.—The chief judge of the Superior Court shall submit the report required under paragraph (1) not later than 6 months after submitting the transition plan under subsection (b) and every 6 months thereafter until the final disposition or transfer to the Family Court of all of the actions and proceedings described in such paragraph.

(f) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The first sentence of section 11-908(a), District of Columbia Code, is amended by striking "The

chief judge" and inserting "Subject to section 11-908A, the chief judge".

(g) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 9 of title 11, District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 11-908 the following new item:

"11-908A. Special rules regarding assignment and service of judges of Family Court."

SEC. 4. IMPROVING ADMINISTRATION OF CASES AND PROCEEDINGS IN FAMILY COURT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 11 of title 11, District of Columbia, is amended by adding at the end the following new sections:

"§ 11-1102. Use of alternative dispute resolution"

"To the greatest extent practicable and safe, cases and proceedings in the Family Court of the Superior Court shall be resolved through alternative dispute resolution procedures, in accordance with such rules as the Superior Court may promulgate.

"§ 11-1103. Standards of practice for appointed counsel"

"The Superior Court shall establish standards of practice for attorneys appointed as counsel in the Family Court of the Superior Court.

"§ 11-1104. Administration"

"(a) 'ONE FAMILY, ONE JUDGE' REQUIREMENT FOR CASES AND PROCEEDINGS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Superior Court shall promulgate rules for the Family Court which require all issues within the jurisdiction of the Family Court concerning one family or one child to be decided by one judge, to the greatest extent practicable, feasible, and lawful.

"(2) SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS.—Under the rules promulgated by the Superior Court under paragraph (1), to the greatest extent practicable, feasible, and lawful—

"(A) if an individual who is a party to an action or proceeding assigned to the Family Court has an immediate family or household member who is a party to another action or proceeding assigned to the Family Court, the individual's action or proceeding shall be assigned to the same judge or magistrate judge to whom the immediate family member's action or proceeding is assigned; and

"(B) if an individual who is a party to an action or proceeding assigned to the Family Court becomes a party to another action or proceeding assigned to the Family Court, the individual's subsequent action or proceeding shall be assigned to the same judge or magistrate judge to whom the individual's initial action or proceeding is assigned.

"(b) RETENTION OF JURISDICTION OVER CASES.—Any action or proceeding assigned to the Family Court of the Superior Court shall remain under the jurisdiction of the Family Court until the action or proceeding is finally disposed. If the judge to whom the action or proceeding is assigned ceases to serve on the Family Court prior to the final disposition of the action or proceeding, the presiding judge of the Family Court shall ensure that the matter or proceeding is reassigned to a judge serving on the Family Court, unless there are extraordinary circumstances, subject to approval and certification by the presiding judge and based on appropriate documentation in the record, which demonstrate that a case is nearing permanency and that changing judges would both delay that goal and result in a violation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (or an amendment made by such Act).

"(c) TRAINING PROGRAM.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The presiding judge of the Family Court shall carry out an ongoing program to provide training in family law

and related matters for judges of the Family Court, other judges of the Superior Court, and appropriate nonjudicial personnel, and shall include in the program information and instruction regarding the following:

"(A) Child development.

"(B) Family dynamics.

"(C) Relevant Federal and District of Columbia laws.

"(D) Permanency planning principles and practices.

"(E) Recognizing the risk factors for child abuse.

"(F) Any other matters the presiding judge considers appropriate.

"(2) USE OF CROSS-TRAINING.—The program carried out under this section shall use the resources of lawyers and legal professionals, social workers, and experts in the field of child development and other related fields.

"(d) ACCESSIBILITY OF MATERIALS, SERVICES, AND PROCEEDINGS; PROMOTION OF 'FAMILY-FRIENDLY' ENVIRONMENT.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—To the greatest extent practicable, the chief judge of the Superior Court shall ensure that the materials and services provided by the Family Court are understandable and accessible to the individuals and families served by the Court, and that the Court carries out its duties in a manner which reflects the special needs of families with children.

"(2) LOCATION OF PROCEEDINGS.—To the maximum extent feasible, safe, and practicable, cases and proceedings in the Family Court shall be conducted at locations readily accessible to the parties involved.

"(e) INTEGRATED COMPUTERIZED CASE TRACKING AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.—The Executive Officer of the District of Columbia courts under section 11-1703 shall work with the Joint Committee on Judicial Administration in the District of Columbia—

"(1) to ensure that all records and materials of cases and proceedings in the Family Court are stored and maintained in electronic format accessible by computers for the use of judges, magistrate judges, and nonjudicial personnel of the Family Court, and for the use of other appropriate offices of the District government in accordance with the plan for integrating computer systems prepared by the Mayor of the District of Columbia under section 4(c) of the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001;

"(2) to establish and operate an electronic tracking and management system for cases and proceedings in the Family Court for the use of judges and nonjudicial personnel of the Family Court, using the records and materials stored and maintained pursuant to paragraph (1); and

"(3) to expand such system to cover all divisions of the Superior Court as soon as practicable.

"§ 11-1105. Social services and other related services"

"(a) ON-SITE COORDINATION OF SERVICES AND INFORMATION.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Mayor of the District of Columbia, in consultation with the chief judge of the Superior Court, shall ensure that representatives of the appropriate offices of the District government which provide social services and other related services to individuals and families served by the Family Court (including the District of Columbia Public Schools, the District of Columbia Housing Authority, the Child and Family Services Agency, the Office of the Corporation Counsel, the Metropolitan Police Department, the Department of Health, and other offices determined by the Mayor) are available on-site at the Family Court to coordinate the provision of such services and information regarding such services to such individuals and families.

"(2) DUTIES OF HEADS OF OFFICES.—The head of each office described in paragraph (1), including the Superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools and the Director of the District of Columbia Housing Authority, shall provide the Mayor with such information, assistance, and services as the Mayor may require to carry out such paragraph.

"(b) APPOINTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES LIAISON WITH FAMILY COURT.—The Mayor of the District of Columbia shall appoint an individual to serve as a liaison between the Family Court and the District government for purposes of subsection (a) and for coordinating the delivery of services provided by the District government with the activities of the Family Court and for providing information to the judges, magistrate judges, and nonjudicial personnel of the Court regarding the services available from the District government to the individuals and families served by the Court. The Mayor shall provide on an ongoing basis information to the chief judge of the Superior Court and the presiding judge of the Family Court regarding the services of the District government which are available for the individuals and families served by the Family Court.

"(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Mayor of the District of Columbia for each fiscal year such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section.

"§ 11-1106. Reports to Congress"

"Not later than 90 days after the end of each calendar year, the chief judge of the Superior Court shall submit a report to Congress on the activities of the Family Court during the year, and shall include in the report the following:

"(1) The chief judge's assessment of the productivity and success of the use of alternative dispute resolution pursuant to section 11-1102.

"(2) Goals and timetables to improve the Family Court's performance in the following year.

"(3) Information on the extent to which the Court met deadlines and standards applicable under Federal and District of Columbia law to the review and disposition of actions and proceedings under the Court's jurisdiction during the year.

"(4) Information on the progress made in finding and utilizing suitable locations and space for the Family Court.

"(5) Information on any factors which are not under the control of the Family Court which interfere with or prevent the Court from carrying out its responsibilities in the most effective manner possible.

"(6) Based on outcome measures derived through the use of the information stored in electronic format under section 11-1104(d), an analysis of the Court's efficiency and effectiveness in managing its case load during the year, including an analysis of the time required to dispose of actions and proceedings among the various categories of the Court's jurisdiction, as prescribed by applicable law and best practices, including (but not limited to) best practices developed by the American Bar Association and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

"(7) If the Court failed to meet the deadlines, standards, and outcome measures described in the previous paragraphs, a proposed remedial action plan to address the failure."

(b) EXPEDITED APPEALS FOR CERTAIN FAMILY COURT ACTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS.—Section 11-721, District of Columbia Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(g) Any appeal from an order of the Family Court of the District of Columbia terminating parental rights or granting or denying a petition to adopt shall receive expedited review by the District of Columbia Court of Appeals and shall be certified by the appellant.”.

(c) PLAN FOR INTEGRATING COMPUTER SYSTEMS.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Mayor of the District of Columbia shall submit to the President and Congress a plan for integrating the computer systems of the District government with the computer systems of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia so that the Family Court of the Superior Court and the appropriate offices of the District government which provide social services and other related services to individuals and families served by the Family Court of the Superior Court (including the District of Columbia Public Schools, the District of Columbia Housing Authority, the Child and Family Services Agency, the Office of the Corporation Counsel, the Metropolitan Police Department, the Department of Health, and other offices determined by the Mayor) will be able to access and share information on the individuals and families served by the Family Court.

(2) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Mayor of the District of Columbia such sums as may be necessary to carry out paragraph (1).

(d) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections for chapter 11 of title 11, District of Columbia Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new items:

“11-1102. Use of alternative dispute resolution.

“11-1103. Standards of practice for appointed counsel.

“11-1104. Administration.

“11-1105. Social services and other related services.

“11-1106. Reports to Congress.”.

SEC. 5. TREATMENT OF HEARING COMMISSIONERS AS MAGISTRATE JUDGES.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—

(1) **REDESIGNATION OF TITLE.**—Section 11-1732, District of Columbia Code, is amended—

(A) by striking “hearing commissioners” each place it appears in subsection (a), subsection (b), subsection (d), subsection (i), subsection (l), and subsection (n) and inserting “magistrate judges”;

(B) by striking “hearing commissioner” each place it appears in subsection (b), subsection (c), subsection (e), subsection (f), subsection (g), subsection (h), and subsection (j) and inserting “magistrate judge”;

(C) by striking “hearing commissioner’s” each place it appears in subsection (e) and subsection (k) and inserting “magistrate judge’s”;

(D) by striking “Hearing commissioners” each place it appears in subsections (b), (d), and (i) and inserting “Magistrate judges”;

(E) in the heading, by striking “Hearing commissioners” and inserting “Magistrate Judges”.

(2) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—(A) Section 11-1732(c)(3), District of Columbia Code, is amended by striking “, except that” and all that follows and inserting a period.

(B) Section 16-924, District of Columbia Code, is amended—

(i) by striking “hearing commissioner” each place it appears and inserting “magistrate judge”;

(ii) in subsection (f), by striking “hearing commissioner’s” and inserting “magistrate judge’s”.

(3) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The item relating to section 11-1732 of the table of sections

of chapter 17 of title 11, D.C. Code, is amended to read as follows:

“11-1732. Magistrate judges.”.

(b) **TRANSITION PROVISION REGARDING HEARING COMMISSIONERS.**—Any individual serving as a hearing commissioner under section 11-1732 of the District of Columbia Code as of the date of the enactment of this Act shall serve the remainder of such individual’s term as a magistrate judge, and may be reappointed as a magistrate judge in accordance with section 11-1732(d), District of Columbia Code, except that any individual serving as a hearing commissioner as of the date of the enactment of this Act who was appointed as a hearing commissioner prior to the effective date of section 11-1732 of the District of Columbia Code shall not be required to be a resident of the District of Columbia to be eligible to be reappointed.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 6. SPECIAL RULES FOR MAGISTRATE JUDGES OF FAMILY COURT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Chapter 17 of title 11, District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting after section 11-1732 the following new section:

“§ 11-1732A. Special rules for magistrate judges of Family Court of the Superior Court

“(a) **USE OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN ADVISORY MERIT SELECTION PANEL.**—The advisory selection merit panel used in the selection of magistrate judges for the Family Court of the Superior Court under section 11-1732(b) shall include certified social workers specializing in child welfare matters who are residents of the District and who are not employees of the District of Columbia Courts.

“(b) **SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS.**—Notwithstanding section 11-1732(c), no individual shall be appointed as a magistrate judge for the Family Court of the Superior Court unless that individual—

“(1) is a citizen of the United States;

“(2) is an active member of the unified District of Columbia Bar;

“(3) for the 5 years immediately preceding the appointment has been engaged in the active practice of law in the District, has been on the faculty of a law school in the District, or has been employed as a lawyer by the United States or District government, or any combination thereof;

“(4) has not fewer than 3 years of training or experience in the practice of family law; and

“(5) is a bona fide resident of the District of Columbia and has maintained an actual place of abode in the District for at least 90 days immediately prior to appointment (or becomes a bona fide resident of the District of Columbia and maintains an actual place of abode in the District not later than 90 days after appointment), and retains such residency during service as a magistrate.

“(c) **SERVICE OF CURRENT HEARING COMMISSIONERS.**—Those individuals serving as hearing commissioners under section 11-1732 on the effective date of this section who meet the qualifications described in subsection (b)(4) may request to be appointed as magistrate judges for the Family Court of the Superior Court under such section.

“(d) **FUNCTIONS.**—A magistrate judge, when specifically designated by the presiding judge of the Family Court of the Superior Court, and subject to the rules of the Superior Court and the right of review under section 11-1732(k), may perform the following functions:

“(1) Administer oaths and affirmations and take acknowledgements.

“(2) Subject to the rules of the Superior Court and applicable Federal and District of

Columbia law, conduct hearings, make findings and enter interim and final orders or judgments in uncontested or contested proceedings within the jurisdiction of the Family Court of the Superior Court (as described in section 11-1101), excluding jury trials and trials of felony cases, as assigned by the presiding judge of the Family Court.

“(3) Subject to the rules of the Superior Court, enter an order punishing an individual for contempt, except that no individual may be detained pursuant to the authority of this paragraph for longer than 180 days.

“(e) **LOCATION OF PROCEEDINGS.**—To the maximum extent feasible, safe, and practicable, magistrate judges of the Family Court of the Superior Court shall conduct proceedings at locations readily accessible to the parties involved.

“(f) **TRAINING.**—The Family Court of the Superior Court shall ensure that all magistrate judges of the Family Court receive training to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities, including specialized training in family law and related matters.”.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—(1) Section 11-1732(a), District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting after “the duties enumerated in subsection (j) of this section” the following: “(or, in the case of magistrate judges for the Family Court of the Superior Court, the duties enumerated in section 11-1732A(d)).”.

(2) Section 11-1732(c), District of Columbia Code, is amended by striking “No individual” and inserting “Except as provided in section 11-1732A(b), no individual”.

(3) Section 11-1732(k), District of Columbia Code, is amended—

(A) by striking “subsection (j),” and inserting the following: “subsection (j) (or proceedings and hearings under section 11-1732A(d), in the case of magistrate judges for the Family Court of the Superior Court);”; and

(B) by inserting after “appropriate division” the following: “(or, in the case of an order or judgment of a magistrate judge of the Family Court of the Superior Court, by a judge of the Family Court).”.

(4) Section 11-1732(l), District of Columbia Code, is amended by inserting after “responsibilities” the following: “(subject to the requirements of section 11-1732A(f) in the case of magistrate judges of the Family Court of the Superior Court).”.

(c) **CLERICAL AMENDMENT.**—The table of sections for subchapter II of chapter 17 of title 11, District of Columbia, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 11-1732 the following new item:

“11-1732A. Special rules for magistrate judges of Family Court of the Superior Court.”.

(d) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) **EXPEDITED INITIAL APPOINTMENTS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia shall appoint not more than 5 individuals to serve as magistrate judges for the Family Division of the Superior Court in accordance with the requirements of sections 11-1732 and 11-1732A, District of Columbia Code (as added by subsection (a)).

(B) **APPOINTMENTS MADE WITHOUT REGARD TO SELECTION PANEL.**—Sections 11-1732(b) and 11-1732A(a), District of Columbia Code (as added by subsection (a)) shall not apply with respect to any magistrate judge appointed under this paragraph.

(C) **PRIORITY FOR CERTAIN ACTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS.**—The chief judge of the Superior

Court and the presiding judge of the Family Division of the Superior Court (acting jointly) shall first assign and transfer to the magistrate judges appointed under this paragraph actions and proceedings described as follows:

(i) The action or proceeding involves an allegation of abuse or neglect.

(ii) The action or proceeding was initiated in the Family Division prior to the 2-year period which ends on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(iii) The judge to whom the action or proceeding is assigned as of the date of the enactment of this Act is not assigned to the Family Division.

(3) **SPECIAL REFERENCES DURING TRANSITION.**—During the period which begins on the date of the enactment of this Act and ends on the effective date described in section 9, any reference to the Family Court of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia in any provision of law added or amended by this section shall be deemed to be a reference to the Family Division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

SEC. 7. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING BORDER AGREEMENT WITH MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA.

It is the sense of Congress that the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the District of Columbia should promptly enter into a border agreement to facilitate the timely and safe placement of children in the District of Columbia's welfare system in foster and kinship homes and other facilities in Maryland and Virginia.

SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the District of Columbia courts such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act and the amendments made by this Act, including sums necessary for salaries and expenses and capital improvements for the District of Columbia courthouse facilities.

SEC. 9. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments made by sections 2 and 4 shall take effect on the first date occurring after the date of the enactment of this Act on which 10 individuals who meet the qualifications described in section 11-908A, District of Columbia Code (as added by section 3(a)) are available to be assigned by the chief judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia to serve as associate judges of the Family Court of the Superior Court (as certified by the chief judge).

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2657.

The **SPEAKER** pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Maryland?

There was no objection.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), our distinguished colleague, introduced H.R. 2657 on July 26 of this year, 2001. This bill has the original cosponsorship of the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS),

the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), and myself and was reported out of subcommittee.

I want to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) for his hard work and his sagacity in introducing and persevering with this important legislation and for being able to include the interests of numerous stakeholders that will be affected by the bill. I also want to recognize the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), the chairman of the Committee on Government Reform, for recognizing the significance of the legislation and his interest in getting the bill to the floor expeditiously, as well as the ranking member of the full committee.

This legislation, the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, is the product of a lot of collaboration, a lot of discussion, and lot of debate; but I think the final product is one that we can all be proud of.

The Family Division of the D.C. Superior Court is supposed to be a last resort, a haven, for abused and neglected children. It should be a place where caring and responsible adults make decisions that protect our most vulnerable and our most precious members of society. But too often, the court has failed in its mission. Cases take too long to process, families are shuttled from one judge to another, and unforgivable mistakes are made. The tragedy of Brianna Blackmond, who was found dead just 2 weeks after a judge removed her from a foster home and returned Brianna to her troubled mother, is the most obvious case. It is far from the only one, as we have heard during my subcommittee's June 26 hearing on the family court.

This legislation takes a huge step forward in improving family court. It adds more judges to the court, requires new judges to stay for at least 5 years, provides for ongoing judicial training, and requires the use of alternative dispute resolution, mediation, and other methods that will not only help speed up case processing but also will allow for less adversarial proceedings. It establishes the position of judge magistrates who will assist the court in reducing its case backlog. It also promotes the idea of one "family, one judge," meaning that families will not have to endure the long delays when their cases are switched from one judicial calendar or judge to another.

But as I have said all along, fixing family court is only one piece of the puzzle. Any upgrades made by Congress must be accompanied by real substantial improvements on behalf of the District's Child and Family Services Agency. I hope my colleagues have had a chance to read the eye-opening Washington Post series this past week on the agency.

Here are the grim statistics: 229 children in the District died between 1993 and 2000, even though their family situation had been brought to the attention of the city's child protective services.

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The Post investigation found that at least 40 of these boys and girls "lost their lives after government workers failed to take key preventive action or placed children in unsafe homes or institutions."

Among the victims are Wesley Lucas, a 10-week-old who died of dehydration after he was placed in the care of a 69-year-old man who himself was dying of lung cancer; Eddie Ward, who died at the age of 13; Eddie was alone on a bus and was later found dead in a decaying house, his body riddled with insect bites; 8-year-old Sylvester Brown, left in the care of his mentally ill mother, who stabbed him so many times the medical examiner could not count the number of wounds.

The series goes on to detail some of the underlying causes for these failures, including inadequate and undertrained employees, high turnover among social workers, limited foster care options, a lack of funding, and poor oversight over the agencies responsible for protecting children.

I know this issue resonates deeply with Mayor Williams. I know he is pushing for wholesale changes in the area of Child Protective Services, and, as I have said before, I stand willing to offer any assistance that I can or our subcommittee can or this Congress can in erasing the deficiencies of this department.

Until then, what we in Congress can do is pass the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001. This bill will help. It will not solve all the problems concerning the District's Child Protective Services, but it will greatly strengthen the Family Court, and that is a good place to start.

I want to take a few moments again to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), and to recognize the commitment of the staff member of the gentleman from Texas, Cassie Bevan, who has devoted untold hours in crafting this legislation, holding meetings with other staff, the courts, and various interested parties.

I also want to recognize Jon Bouker of the staff of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON); also my staff director, Russell Smith, and Victoria Proctor of the staff of the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) who worked with Cassie Bevan to bring this bill to the floor. So it has been a collaborative effort.

Mr. Speaker, I urge our colleagues to support H.R. 2657, a bill which will be beneficial to the most vulnerable children of the District of Columbia and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2657, the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001. However, I

want first to thank the current Chair of the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), and the former chair of the subcommittee, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS), for their contributions to the bill; also, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) who assisted with this bill, even though he is not a member of our subcommittee; our full committee chairman, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), and the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), for their leadership and for expediting this bill, which needed the permission of the chair and the ranking member to come to the House floor without a full committee markup after it passed our subcommittee unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, this truncated action was necessary in order to assure that the bill was ready for the floor in time for the fiscal 2002 appropriation process.

If I may say so, Mr. Speaker, Cassie Bevan and Jon Bouker, Cassie Bevan of the staff of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and Jon Bouker of my staff, did much of the heavy lifting to get this bill to the point that we find it today. We very much appreciate their hard work.

I would particularly like to thank the majority whip of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), whose interest, energy, and commitment has been an indispensable force behind the Family Court Act.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and I are not of the same party, but he and I share an overriding concern for the children of this country and for children caught in the District's foster care system.

The concern and involvement of the gentleman from Texas did not end with this bill, or with seeking to have it reach the floor expeditiously. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) is chiefly responsible for the millions of dollars that are now part of the D.C. appropriation that will fund the reforms that this bill mandates.

I also appreciate the support of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) for the return of the agency responsible for foster care in the District, the Child and Family Services Agency, to the D.C. government from a failed Federal court receivership.

The need to update the Family Division became a priority as a result of the tragic death of Brianna Blackmond, an infant who was allowed to return to her troubled mother without a hearing after it was alleged that lawyers representing all the parties, the social workers, and the guardians ad litem all certified that the child should be returned.

Several important investigations followed the child's death, especially concerning the agency chiefly responsible, the Child and Family Services Agency, then under a Federal court receivership. Because a Federal court had juris-

diction, we held hearings in the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia on the District's child welfare system. My staff and I commenced a detailed investigation of best practices of family courts and family divisions here and around the country, and began writing a bill, because D.C. local courts are Federal courts not under the jurisdiction of the D.C. government.

Meanwhile, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and his staff also were working on a bill, and we soon began working together to produce a single product, with support and assistance from our Chair, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), from the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS), and other interested Members.

The Family Court Act is the result of this joint effort, the culmination of a collegial process spanning several months. The subcommittee held a hearing on the Family Court Act on June 26, 2001, prior to reporting it unanimously to the full committee.

It must be noted that the D.C. City Council is far more familiar with the children and families of the city than we in the Congress, and are best qualified to write such a bill. However, when the Home Rule Act was passed in 1973, Congress withheld jurisdiction over Federal courts from the city. The District of Columbia needs to have the same control of its courts as other cities.

In the meantime, at my request, the council passed a resolution in support of the reforms in this bill, after scrutinizing it and offering their own recommendations for changes. We have also worked closely with Mayor Anthony Williams and Chief Judge Rufus King and the judges of the Superior Court in writing this bill.

The D.C. Family Court Act of 2001 is the first overhaul of our Family Division since 1970, when it was upgraded to be part of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. The old Family Court, then called Juvenile Court, was a stand-alone court that had become a place apart, in effect a ghetto court, to which the city's most troubled children and families were sent, away from the real judicial system and out of sight, which left children and families out of mind until the Juvenile Court was abolished as hopelessly ineffective and poorly funded.

All agree that the Family Division has proved to be a vast improvement over the Juvenile Court, despite the increasing number of abused and neglected children, troubled juveniles, and families in crisis typical of big cities and of foster care systems in rural areas, suburbs, and cities alike today.

However, no court or other institution should go a full 30 years without a close examination of its strengths and weaknesses. The Family Division increasingly has been taxed by intractable societal problems, and, in addition, must depend on an outside agency, the Child and Family Services Agency, which only recently had been

adjudged so dysfunctional that it had been taken over by the Federal courts and placed in receivership.

Our bill incorporates what we found in our investigation to be the best practices from successful independent family courts and family divisions as a part of family courts across the country.

These courts have in common several basic reforms: creating an independent family court or division; providing ample family court judges to handle family matters; mandating terms for judges in family court; requiring family court judge magistrate judges and other court personnel to have training or expertise in family law; requiring ongoing training of family court judges and other personnel; employing alternative dispute resolution and mediation in family cases; adhering to the standard of "one family one judge" in family cases; retaining family cases in the Family Court and the Family Court alone; using magistrate judges to assist family court judges with their caseloads; and dedicating special magistrate judges to assist judges with current pending cases. The D.C. Family Court Act incorporates all of these best practices.

As important as our bill is, the major problem for children and families in the District is not the court but the Child and Family Services Agency. The court needs more resources and it needs modernization. CFSA needs a complete makeover. Yet, after 6 years in a family court receivership, CFSA is returning to the District largely because the receivership failed, not because that agency has been revitalized.

No matter what we achieve in our Family Division bill, children and families are unlikely to notice much difference in their lives unless CFSA is fundamentally changed. Courts are the back end of the process when all else has failed, the last resort when people must be compelled to do what they are required to do. Our bill assures that the city has a full-time staff liaison on-site at the court, but inevitably the court will be handicapped by the condition of CFSA in the first years of the agency's return to the District.

Assuring that CFSA and the new Family Court of the Superior Court are seamless in their response to our children and families is a formidable challenge for both the city and the court. Because the court has been generally well run and responsive to children and families, I believe that with new resources and additional and updated functions, the court can do the job.

The city's challenge to both reform the CFSA and realign the agency with the court is more serious. However, Mayor Williams' careful work in management reform and accountability and the council's diligent oversight encourages optimism. The mayor's own background as a foster child will surely encourage dedication.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by saying that although I strongly support

this bill, the speed with which we have had to bring the bill to the floor precluded me from offering several amendments to sharpen various provisions of the act. These amendments are important to ensure, for example, that the necessary work of disposing of a large volume of pending cases and continuing intake of new cases coming into the new Family Court does not overwhelm the court while it meets timetables mandated in the bill.

In addition, my amendments will ensure that the jurisdiction of the court's successful domestic violence unit is not undermined by the bill.

It is also critical to strengthen language in the bill calling on Maryland and Virginia to enter foster care agreements with the District to ensure rapid placement of our children, without undue expense to our State partners or harmful delay to our children.

We have all agreed that these and other matters should be discussed with our Senate partners as we move forward in our negotiation to produce a consensus bill. The Senate has been wonderfully cooperative and collaborative with us in all aspects of this bill.

I want to once again thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) for his tireless work and partnership with me on this bill, and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) for their special efforts on this important piece of legislation.

I urge all of our colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for her wonderful comments, but even beyond that, for the work that has been done through the years to make this bill possible. As was mentioned time and time again, this has been a collaborative effort. But all collaborative efforts have to have a leader. They have to have somebody who is going to guide, watch over, and make sure and bring the parties together.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), who is that person and that leader.

(Mr. DELAY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks and to include extraneous material.)

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding time to me, and for her kind remarks. I thank the gentlewoman from Washington, D.C. (Ms. NORTON) for her kind remarks.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first day of the rest of reform in the child welfare system in Washington, D.C. This is not the end of reform, as the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) has so eloquently stated. This is an ongoing effort. It is going to take

everybody in Washington, D.C., as well as in Congress, to do what is necessary to save the kids of the District.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001 is to save lives of children in the District. We do this by creating a specialized Family Court that will allow judges to spend more time hearing, reviewing, and monitoring the accomplishments of abused and neglected children.

The work that has been done by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) is exemplary, and it has taken a long, hard road to get to where we are in putting this legislation together.

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I also want to thank my colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), who has had his input and his support for this legislation, obviously.

I too want to thank the real movers and shakers of this House. And that is the staff, John Bouker, staff member of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON); Russell Smith and Heea Vazirani-Fales of the office of the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA); Victoria Proctor and Melissa Wogciak of the office of the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS); and Mark Agrast of the office of the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT).

Most importantly, the driving force for all of us is a woman that is really incredible in her knowledge of what children need, especially abused and neglected children and their needs, is Dr. Casie Bevan on my staff. Without her leadership, none of this would have happened.

Last week, The Washington Post ran a series of articles under the headline "Protected Children Died as Government Did Little." The Post attributed 40 child deaths in the past decade, including Brianna Blackmond, to the District's failed child protection system. This system includes the judges and the Superior Court as well as the social workers and the police. Our bill aims to put the need of the children for safety and permanency first. And here is how we do it:

We require that the judges be trained before they serve on Family Court. We mandate that judges sit on the Family Court bench for 5 years, long enough to become effective, and we insist that every judge that serves on the Family Court be a volunteer.

Our bill creates a separate pool of judges to set on Family Court with the desired training and expertise necessary to serve. Training is critical for judges who have to decide if and when a home is too dangerous for a child to remain there or safe enough for a child to be returned.

Meaningful change cannot happen without committed judges. That is why

I believe that 5-year terms are a key measure. A 5-year term on Family Court increases the chance that a judge really wants to serve on this bench and is not just serving time.

Today, judges who rotate off the family division bench take cases with them. Our bill ends that practice. A specialized family court, by its very nature, requires that all family cases remain in this court until they are closed. The "one judge, one family" concept is central to real reform. Only a judge who knows the full history surrounding a child's family and reasons for placement will be better able to consider the child's best interests.

Our bill provides resources to hire more judges and magistrate judges in order to decrease the number of children seen by each judicial officer. With this change, more time can be spent with the children and their families to identify their need and to monitor progress.

Funds are provided under this bill to upgrade and integrate the computer systems at the courts and at the Child and Family Services agency so that children do not become lost in the system, like they have been in the past.

Finally, our bill authorizes funds for expanding courtroom facilities to accommodate the increased number of judges and magistrates hired to hear these cases. We hope this expansion will lead to closer monitoring of the cases and increased judicial oversight. Too many cries have gone unanswered.

I cannot say enough about the work that has been done on behalf of the children of the District in pulling this bill together. I greatly appreciate everyone's input and everybody's work. The children will benefit.

Mr. Speaker, I am attaching a section-by-section analysis of my statement containing my comments and summarizing congressional intent supporting each provision. I insert this for the RECORD so that the intent of Congress in passing this legislation is clear and unequivocal.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FAMILY COURT ACT OF 2001

PURPOSE

To redesignate the Family Division as a Family Court of the Superior Court. To recruit and retain trained and experienced judges to serve in the Family Court.

Intent: This legislation is intended to reorganize the Family Court so that more time will be spent on making expeditious and informed decisions that affect the lives of the children brought before the court. With this legislation will come specialized judges, who volunteer to serve on the Family Court and to sit on the bench for 5 years, so that they can gain the experience necessary to make good decisions that will impact the lives and the futures of the children that come before them.

Section 1. Short title

Title: "District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001".

Section 2. Redesignation of Family Division as Family Court of the Superior Court

The Family Division of the Superior Court is renamed the Family Court of the Superior Court.

Intent: Note that we considered creating a separate court but were concerned about the additional expenses for administration and facilities that a separate court would create. Expenses that we could not tie to improved outcomes for abused children and their families. However, the intent here is not to merely rename the family division but to establish a Family Court that will make the safety and permanency of abused children its highest and exclusive priority. This is accomplished by reforming the way the Family Court is organized to create specialized pools for the recruitment of judges, to lengthen the judicial term to five years, and to increase the training these family court judges receive. The reorganization includes expanding the judicial powers of the magistrate judges to close cases.

The Chief Judge of Superior Court assigns a judge as the Presiding Judge of Family Court.

Intent: While the assignment of a Presiding Judge is left to the Chief Judge, the intent of Congress here is that the presiding Judge be given sufficient authority so that he can be held accountable for the actions of the Family Court. Congress considers the role of the Presiding Judge to be significantly different from the current role and expects to see this difference articulated in the transition plan.

The Family Court will have broad and exclusive jurisdiction over all family related matters.

Section 3. Appointment of judges; number and qualifications

The number of judges to serve on Family Court will be determined by the chief judge under a transition plan to be submitted to the President and Congress.

Intent: This issue of the number of judges is crucial to the success of the reforms. Unfortunately, to date DC Superior Court has not provided an empirically based workload analysis to justify an increase in Family Court judges. Moreover, it is uncertain the effect the magistrate judges will have on the caseload but Congress expects that the magistrate judges will be able to bring a significant number of cases to resolution. Again, we look to the transition plan to provide the details on the number of judges needed to serve.

The number of judges on the Family Court must not exceed 15.

Intent: Note that this number represents an increase of 3 judges as requested by the Chief Judge. Again, we look forward to the transition plan for justification.

Special qualifications are established for judges who volunteer to serve in Family Court (training or expertise in family law, commitment to serving for full term and willingness to participate in ongoing training).

Intent: The qualifications of the Family Court judges are intimately linked to reforming the courts. While Congress did not quantify the years of training or expertise, we did envision that the training or expertise be established and verifiable. It is absolutely essential that the candidate commits to serving the full term as this indicates that the candidate wants to sit on the Family Court bench and is not using the initial placement onto the bench as a stepping-stone merely to further his/her career. The judges' willingness to participate in ongoing training indicates his/her dedication to serving the children and families under his/her jurisdiction.)

Judges currently serving on Family Court are required to serve for a minimum of three years (the time consecutively served in Family Court counts towards the three year term.)

Intent: This provision grandfathers the judges currently on the bench to three-year terms. The intent here is to ensure that judges currently sitting who want to serve on the Family Court be required to spend the minimum of three years to provide the children under their care with the continuity and the focus that each of their cases deserve.

Judges currently serving on Superior Court are required to serve for a minimum of three years (the time outside of the Family Division does not count toward the three year term).

Intent: While this provision allows judges outside of the Family Court to voluntarily return to the Family Court it requires that the judges serve for a minimum of three years. Again, this provision grandfathers only those judges who meet the requirements and voluntarily request to transfer to Family Court.

New Judges assigned to the Family Court are required to serve for a term of five years.

Intent: A review of the length of terms in Family Courts nationwide indicates that only three of the 13 states with Family Courts serve less than five years. Congress strongly endorses this provision as indicating a judicial commitment to the families and children in his/her court and his/her willingness to become an expert in this specialty of law to benefit those that come before the bench. It is envisioned that the new judges will be recruited because of their interest and expertise and that they will volunteer for this pool because of their dedication. The reforms that Congress anticipates hinge on the recruitment and retention of judges with training and expertise in family law who serve for five years. Five years will allow the judge sufficient time on the bench to become the true expert that is needed in these challenging cases.

A judge is permitted to serve on Family Court for the entire term of service that is 15 years.

Intent: The purpose of this provision is to allow a judge who wants to serve on the Family Court for his/her entire career to do so.

Family Court judges may be reassigned for additional terms of service as the chief judge may provide.

The chief judge may reassign a judge of the Family Court if the determination is made that the judge is unable to continue serving in the Family Court.

Intent: This provision allows for the removal of a judge from the Family Court bench when this judge is unable to continue because to continue would not be in the best interests of the children under his jurisdiction. This reassignment must not be made to advance the judges' career but must be made because the judges' ability to serve the Family Court is questioned.

Within 90 days, the chief judge must submit a transition plan for the Family Court to the President and to Congress containing the following: (A) a determination of the number of judges needed to serve on the Family Court; (B) a determination of the role and function of the presiding judge of the Family Court; (C) a determination of the number of magistrate judges needed for appointment; (D) a determination of the appropriate functions of the magistrate judges together with compensation and other personnel matters; (E) a plan for a case flow, case management, and staffing needs (both judicial and non-judicial); (F) a description of how the Superior Court will implement the "one family one judge" requirement for cases and proceedings in the Family Court; (G) an analysis of the needs of the Family Court for space, equipment, and other physical requirements; (H) an analysis of the ef-

fectiveness of expediting the hiring of magistrates to handle laws and best practices.

Intent: It is critical that this transition plan be based on an empirical analysis of the workload, the equipment needs and the adequacy of the facility. This is meant to be a "needs assessment" plan based on data analysis. The plan must specify the court's budgetary assumptions. How the various aspects in the plan translate to improved outcomes for the children and families served must be clearly noted. The plan must detail the specific improvements in the handling of child abuse and neglect cases that will become possible with the increased funding proposed.

The chief judge must take action to provide for the earliest practicable return or resolution of all cases carried by judges outside of the Family Division to the Family Court but this must take place no later than 18 months from the submission of the transition plan.

Intent: While the statute allows the chief judge 18 months to complete the return of all cases, the cases should start returning to the Family Court as soon as the magistrate judges are hired.

The chief judge must ensure that cases pending within the jurisdiction of the Family Court as of the date of enactment are immediately assigned to the Family Court.

The chief judge may not take any action to implement the transition plan until Congress and the President have 30 days to review.

Intent: The purpose here is to ensure that Congress and the President have time to review the plan.

The chief judge must include in the transition plan an analysis of how many judges currently on the bench in Superior Court meet the qualifications for judges of Family Court. If the chief judge determines that the number is less than the number needed to serve on Family Court a request must be made to the President for the appointment of additional judges for Family Court.

Intent: At the time of passage in the House, it is unclear how many judges sitting on the bench will volunteer for the Family Court or qualify under this proposal to sit. Therefore, it is important that the chief judge only after review make a request for a specified number of additional judges.

After receiving the request from the chief judge the President must appoint additional qualified judges to serve on the Family Court. The District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission, upon the request from the chief judge, must provide nominees to fill these vacancies in the Superior Court equal to the number of judicial appointments requested by the chief judge and must recruit individuals for nomination to the Superior Court who meet the qualifications for judges of Family Court.

For the purpose of making the transition only the initial appointments to Family Court will be made without regard to the limit on the number of Superior Court Judges.

Intent: The appointments without regard to the limit on the number of Superior Court judges are one-time only.

The Comptroller General is required to submit a report analyzing the impact of these reforms on the time required to make appointments to the Family Court, on the impact of the magistrate judges on the workload of judges, on how the number of judges may be affected by the qualification requirements for judges, and, on the timeliness of the resolution of cases.

The chief judge must submit a status report every six months to the President and Congress on the backlog of cases that are still outside of the Family Court.

Intent: While the chief judge has 18 months to return all the cases to the Family Court,

Congress requires the chief judge to provide a status report every six months on the progress of the return of these cases to the Family Court.

Section 4. Improving administration of cases and proceedings in Family Court

To the greatest extent practicable, cases must be resolved through alternative dispute resolution procedures.

The Superior Court must establish standards of practice for attorneys appointed to Family Court.

The Superior Court must promulgate rules for the Family Court requiring "one family, one judge" so that all issues concerning one family or one child are decided by one judge, to the greatest extent practicable.

Intent: Extensive testimony was taken regarding the importance of this provision. While the provision does not prohibit the establishment of separate calendars, the intent here is that children see the same judge while their cases remain open and before the court. The rationale behind one judge/one child is to provide the child with judicial continuity so that the approach to the case and to the child is seamless and comprehensive.

Family members who have actions pending in family court will be assigned to the same judge or magistrate judge.

Intent: This provision recognizes the importance of keeping all matters involving one family or household before the same judge. When the members of the same family have actions before the same judge this enhances the judges understanding of not just the particular case before him but of the family dynamics that impact each family member in each case.

Children who have actions pending in family court will be assigned to the same judge or magistrate judge.

Intent: While this provision does not prohibit separate calendars the provision envisions that separate calendars will not be routinely used which would necessitate children's cases being heard by different judges. The drafters have taken testimony that there are no due process violations in implementing the one judge/one child plan.

All cases will remain in Family Court until final disposition (even if the judge involved moves out of the Family Court) unless there are extraordinary circumstances which show that a case is nearing permanency and that changing judges would both delay that goal and result in a violation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.

Intent: Cases that remain outside of Family Court are meant to be truly extraordinary circumstances and the drafters do not envision more than 10% of these cases falling within this category.

The presiding judge of the Family Court must implement a Family Law training program for judges, magistrates and nonjudicial personnel to include among other things: child development, family dynamics and recognizing the risk factors in child abuse.

The training program is required to use social workers and experts in child development as well as lawyers and legal professionals.

The presiding judge of the Family Court must ensure that materials and services be understandable and accessible to the families served and that the environment be family friendly.

Cases and proceedings in the Family Court must be conducted at locations readily accessible to the parties involved to the extent practicable.

The Executive Officer of the court must provide for an integrated computerized case tracking and management system to: (1) ensure that all records, materials and pro-

ceedings be computerized; (2) establish an integrated tracking system for cases and proceedings to be used by judicial and non-judicial personnel; and (3) expand when feasible the integrated computer system to all divisions of Superior Court.

Social Services will be coordinated on site with the Mayor ensuring that the appropriate offices are represented.

Intent: Coordination between social service agencies and the courts is absolutely essential to the success of these reforms. The drafters remain concerned about the lack of coordination to date and have inserted this provision to hold both the Mayor and the Chief Judge accountable for providing coordination.

The Mayor must ensure that representatives of the relevant agencies be on-site to coordinate social services and provide information to the judges about the availability of services.

Intent: The judges must be informed by social services representatives about the availability and quality of prevention, intervention and placement services available to serve the children moving through the court system.

The Mayor must appoint a Social Services Liaison with Family Court for coordinating the delivery of services.

The chief judge must submit an annual report to Congress on the activities of the Family Court to include: (1) an assessment of the alternative dispute resolution process; (2) goals and timetables to improve Family Court performance; (3) information on the extent to which the Court is in compliance with relevant Federal and District of Columbia laws; (4) information on the progress made in finding suitable locations and space for the Family Court; (5) information on any factors which are not under the control of the Family Court which interfere with or prevent the Court from carrying out its responsibilities; (6) an analysis of the Court's efficiency and effectiveness in managing its caseload; and, (7) any proposed remedial action plan needed to address any failures.

Intent: This report must be comprehensive to allow Congress to fulfill its oversight responsibilities. This report must provide sufficient empirical evidence to document the extent of progress.

Appeals terminating parental rights or petitions to adopt are required to receive expedited review by the DC Court of Appeals.

Within six months after enactment, the Mayor and the Courts are required to submit a plan to develop an integrated computer system that will interface with appropriate agencies.

Intent: The Mayor and the Courts have to work together to develop this integrated computer system that meets the requirements of both the social service system and the Court system to track and monitor children as they come into and move through the various systems.

Funds are to be provided to the Mayor to carry out these requirements.

Section 5 Hearing Commissioners renamed magistrate judges.

Hearing commissioners are renamed magistrate judges.

Section 6. Special rules for magistrate judges of Family Court of the Superior Court

The advisory merit selection panel used to select magistrate judges must include certified social workers specializing in child welfare matters.

Magistrate judges must have no fewer than 5 years practicing law in the District and no less than 3 years of training or experience in family law. Magistrate judges will be appointed for 4 years.

The Board of Judges may suspend or remove a magistrate judge.

Magistrate judges will: administer oaths, establish and enforce child support orders, make findings and enter final judgments. Contempt powers will also be afforded to the magistrates.

Intent: Magistrate judges are given expanded powers to hear and resolve cases to expedite the handling and timing of decisions.

Magistrate judges must conduct proceedings at readily accessible locations to the extent feasible.

Magistrate judges must be trained in family law.

The initial appointment of no more than five magistrate judges will be expedited.

Intent: This provision ensures that upon enactment, the backlog of cases pending outside of the family court will be addressed.

Cases involving allegations of maltreatment that are at least two years in the system and are currently handled by judges outside of the Family Division will be given priority to be referred to the magistrate judges for expedited handling.

Intent: This provision is an attempt to triage the cases in the backlog so that the oldest cases are reviewed first.

Section 7. Sense of Congress regarding border agreements with Maryland and Virginia

Congress resolves that DC, Maryland and Virginia should promptly enter into border agreements to facilitate timely placement of DC children.

Intent: Testimony has been received that indicates that problems with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children are causing lengthy delays in the placement of children. A border agreement would facilitate the movement of children across state lines to ensure timely placement.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Special magistrate judges will be hired immediately to handle the backlog of cases pending outside of the Family Division.

The Act becomes effective as soon as ten judges who meet the qualifications are appointed to serve on the Family Court.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 7 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), who has been very helpful in assisting us on this bill because of his own interest in the children of this country; and I want to especially thank a member of his staff, Mark Agrast, who was also very helpful to all of us.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time. I caught the earliest flight possible from Boston today because I felt it was important to be here to commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for their resolve and commitment to achieve a result that would be truly effective. This is truly remarkable, and they deserve our gratitude.

It is also, I suggest, a good day for children, not just here in the District of Columbia but all over America. Given the events of the past week, it is good to stand here and to say it is a good day. It is a good day. As the majority whip indicated, today is a new day for reform. Maybe this bill is also a new day for the children and the future of America.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) and the gentlewoman from the

District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) have worked together with the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) for months, through many drafts, to reach agreement. It is honestly a tribute to their shared concern for children, which they do share, and particularly the children of the District, that they have been able to put aside the usual political differences and work together to achieve a well-crafted, thoughtful bill that I am confident will make a huge difference in the lives of many, many children and their families.

If anyone had any doubt about the importance of this legislation, and it has been alluded to by the gentlewoman from Maryland, the gentleman from Texas and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, but it cannot be stated often enough, they would only have to read the shocking series which ran in *The Washington Post*. Those articles documented the fate of 180 of the 229 children who died in the District of Columbia between 1993 and the year 2000 after their families came to the attention of the District's child protection system. We cannot, again, say it often enough. According to *The Post*, at least 40 of these children died because government workers placed them in unsafe homes or institutions or otherwise failed to take timely action to protect them.

It is too late to do anything to save those children, but this legislation will help ensure that the children currently in the system and those who come after them do not suffer a similar fate. I genuinely believe that this bill will do more. The children who never had a family, who have never known what the term "home" really means, I would suggest never really have a break in life, and often end up in our prison systems.

There has been study after study which corroborate the relationship between crime and the dysfunctional family. One study by a professor at the University of Rhode Island, Professor Gellis, who examined 50 inmates who were serving time in the San Quentin institution in California, revealed that of those 50 inmates serving time for armed robbery, every single one of them was a legacy of a dysfunctional family, had been abused or neglected as children. What better anti-crime initiative than this legislation before us?

Now, I want to join with my colleagues who have already sung the praises of the staff members that have been involved in this. I want to make special mention of Cassie Bevan, on the staff of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), and John Bouker, on the staff of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

This is not the first time I have worked with Cassie. We have worked together on a number of other children's issues, especially in conjunction with intercountry adoption. I have learned to trust her judgment, to value

her tenacity, and to admire her deep commitment to the well-being of children everywhere and her love for children in need. I would also note that the same is true of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY). And this is truly profound and inspirational for many of us.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT) for his comments and the fact that in working with him I know of his concern about human rights and children's rights and applaud him.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS), someone who has been a leader in helping to craft this bill through the years and my predecessor as chairman of the District of Columbia authorizing committee.

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding me this time. And I rise in strong support of H.R. 2657, the District of Columbia Family Court Act of 2001, which will create structural and management reforms so the Family Court can better serve the needs of the city's vulnerable children.

The bill addresses the recruitment and retention of family court judges and mandates longer judicial terms of service in the Family Court to ensure continuity in the handling of cases. Additionally, it imposes the critically important "one family, one judge" requirement for the Family Court.

After the tragic death of 23-month-old Brianna Blackmond in January of 2000, the Subcommittee on the District of Columbia held two hearings to review the status of the Child and Family Services Administration and to determine how we could prevent further tragedies. It was clear from those hearings that reforming CFSA alone would be insufficient. The court plays an integral role in the D.C.'s child welfare system and has to be overhauled as well.

Anyone who has been following *The Washington Post's* coverage of the District's most vulnerable residents understands this is very complex and challenging, and will require a comprehensive response. It is imperative that the Family Court judges have the knowledge, the training, and the administrative processes in place so that the best interests of the children in the City's child welfare system can be served. This bill puts the court on the right track. It provides strategic management tools the court needs to accomplish key reform objectives.

Decisions the Family Court judges make often have a lasting impact on children's lives. We do not want judges to feel burdened by service in the Family Court. This assignment should never be a form of punishment. That is why this bill encourages volunteerism and appoints the Family Court judges who have committed themselves to the

practice of family law. To ensure greater continuity, judges need to serve on the Family Court longer than the 1 year they have typically served now. Therefore, the term of service on the Family Court for new judicial appointees for D.C. Superior Court is 5 years.

Additionally, the "one family, one judge" requirement will allow Family Court judges to handle cases from intake through final disposition. They will then have a full history of the child's family dynamics to help them make better informed decisions regarding the safety and the welfare of the child.

H.R. 2657 mandates the immediate return of all family law cases to the Family Court. The court must eliminate the backlog and manage cases within the time frame established by the adoption of the Safe Families Act. To facilitate case management, the bill directs the court to integrate its computer system so that judges, magistrate judges, and nonjudicial personnel will have access to all pending cases related to a child and his or her family. The bill requires the D.C. government to integrate the computer systems with those of the Superior Court to improve communication in the sharing of information about families served by the court.

In addition to the training requirement for judges, it is important that they are well informed about critical social services available to the children and the families they serve. By requiring a social services liaison and representatives from D.C. agencies to be on site, our bill gives judges the tools to help children and families access much-needed programs and services.

I would like to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for their leadership and dedication on this issue.

H.R. 2657 mandates critical and long overdue reforms to the current family division of the D.C. Superior Court, and I urge all my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS) for all of the work that went into this bill in collaboration with the others.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), co-chair of the Children's Caucus.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2657 and add my deep appreciation to the distinguished gentlewoman from the District of Columbia and for her ability to work across party lines, and to my colleague from Texas, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the majority

whip, who has shown, as has the representative from the District of Columbia, a deep and abiding caring for the children of this Nation and of this community, and to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), whose task and commitment in this process were necessary to see this legislation move forward.

My reason for wanting to add my comments is to say to Brianna Blackmond that we have not forgotten her, and to be able to say that this legislation brings honor to lawyers who practice in family courts and to the discipline of family law and family courts. This system now will develop in the District of Columbia judges who will have long-lasting expertise and commitment to the issues dealing with families, and a D.C. bar that is further enhanced because their focus is on the family court system and families. That will help put a dent in the tragedy of 180 of the District of Columbia's children from 1993 to 2000 that died after the families came to the attention of the District's Child and Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, the important aspect of this is that they came to the attention of that agency, but the connection was lost so those children may have been placed back in homes or back in foster care that was not good for them and resulted in their death.

Obviously we know that abused children result in juvenile delinquents and incarcerated adults. With a family court tracking the system of many of our States, we will have a professional court that deals specifically with these issues. This has been a tumultuous time. We have seen in the last week the trauma on families and the trauma on children across the Nation who may have lost their parents during the tragedies of September 11.

We are making a commitment today to provide another vehicle to nurture our children and protect them, as we will do throughout these days for children who suffered through September 11, 2001.

I applaud the proponents of this legislation. I believe this will make the family court in the District of Columbia a very prominent example of how we can save lives and track families and how we can intervene appropriately in order to provide the most nurturing and supportive system for our children.

Mr. Speaker, I add my applause for those who have supported and will help pass this legislation.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I reiterate this is a terrific bill. It is a gleam of light in a very difficult time. I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) for his leadership and the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS). I thank my colleagues who

spoke, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. DELAHUNT), and all of the people who will be voting for this bill. Indeed, it could not happen if we did not have great staff.

Mr. Speaker, I reiterate the names of some of the staff: Casie Bevan, Russell Smith, Heea Vazirani-Fales, John Bouker, Victoria Proctor, Melissa Wogciak, and all of the others who have toiled to bring this about. I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 2657, a bill that will be beneficial to the most vulnerable children of the District of Columbia and their families and strengthen our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2657.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2779

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 2779.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION ACT OF 2001

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1900) to amend the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to provide quality prevention programs and accountability programs relating to juvenile delinquency; and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1900

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2001".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Findings.
- Sec. 3. Purpose.
- Sec. 4. Definitions.
- Sec. 5. Concentration of Federal effort.

Sec. 6. Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Sec. 7. Annual report.

Sec. 8. Allocation.

Sec. 9. State plans.

Sec. 10. Juvenile delinquency prevention block grant program.

Sec. 11. Research; evaluation; technical assistance; training.

Sec. 12. Demonstration projects.

Sec. 13. Authorization of appropriations.

Sec. 14. Administrative authority.

Sec. 15. Use of funds.

Sec. 16. Limitation on use of funds.

Sec. 17. Rules of construction.

Sec. 18. Leasing surplus Federal property.

Sec. 19. Issuance of rules.

Sec. 20. Content of materials.

Sec. 21. Technical and conforming amendments.

Sec. 22. Effective date; application of amendments.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Section 101 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5601) is amended to read as follows:

"FINDINGS

"SEC. 101. (a) The Congress finds the following:

"(1) Although the juvenile violent crime arrest rate in 1999 was the lowest in the decade, there remains a consensus that the number of crimes and the rate of offending by juveniles nationwide is still too high.

"(2) According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, allowing 1 youth to leave school for a life of crime and of drug abuse costs society \$1,700,000 to \$2,300,000 annually.

"(3) One in every 6 individuals (16.2 percent) arrested for committing violent crime in 1999 was less than 18 years of age. In 1999, juveniles accounted for 9 percent of murder arrests, 17 percent of forcible rape arrests, 25 percent of robbery arrests, 14 percent of aggravated assault arrests, and 24 percent of weapons arrests.

"(4) More than 1/2 of juvenile murder victims are killed with firearms. Of the nearly 1,800 murder victims less than 18 years of age, 17 percent of the victims less than 13 years of age were murdered with a firearm, and 81 percent of the victims 13 years of age or older were killed with a firearm.

"(5) Juveniles accounted for 13 percent of all drug abuse violation arrests in 1999. Between 1990 and 1999, juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations rose 132 percent.

"(6) Over the last 3 decades, youth gang problems have increased nationwide. In the 1970's, 19 States reported youth gang problems. By the late 1990's, all 50 States and the District of Columbia reported gang problems. For the same period, the number of cities reporting youth gang problems grew 843 percent, and the number of counties reporting gang problems increased more than 1,000 percent.

"(7) According to a national crime survey of individuals 12 years of age or older during 1999, those 12 to 19 years old are victims of violent crime at higher rates than individuals in all other age groups. Only 30.8 percent of these violent victimizations were reported by youth to police in 1999.

"(8) One-fifth of juveniles 16 years of age who had been arrested were first arrested before attaining 12 years of age. Juveniles who are known to the juvenile justice system before attaining 13 years of age are responsible for a disproportionate share of serious crimes and violence.

"(9) The increase in the arrest rates for girls and young juvenile offenders has changed the composition of violent offenders entering the juvenile justice system.